

**T
E
R
R
O
R**



NO. 34
FEB.-MAR.

TALES

**REPRINT
EDITION**

FROM THE

CRYPT

FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER

IN THIS ISSUE:
E.C.'S ADAPTATION OF A STORY BY
RAY BRADBURY
AMERICA'S TOP HORROR WRITER!



JACK THE RIPPER

JACK & PAUL

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! BACK AGAIN, I SEE! BACK FOR MORE CHILLS IN TALES FROM THE CRYPT! WELCOME, THEN! WELCOME TO THE CRYPT OF TERROR! IT'S YOUR HOST IN HORROR, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, READY TO CURDLE YOUR BLOOD WITH ANOTHER GREEPS COLLECTORS ITEM! SO COME IN! IN THIS YARN, YOU WILL BE THE MAIN CHARACTER! OH, YOU'D LIKE THAT? WELL, WE'LL SEE! EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS WILL BE SEEN THROUGH YOUR...THE MAIN CHARACTER'S...EYES! READY? THEN START LIVING THE TALE I CALL...

MIRROR, MIRROR, ON THE WALL!



YOU OPEN YOUR EYES, AND THE GLARING LIGHT OVERHEAD BLINDS YOU! SUDDENLY YOU REALIZE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN UNDER A SWIRLING SEA OF DARKNESS AND HAVE ONLY NOW COME TO THE SURFACE! A GREY HAZE HANGS OVER YOU... BUT SOON, EVEN THAT CLEARS AWAY LIKE COBWEBS BEING SWEEPED ASIDE BY A FASTIDIOUSLY WIELDED DUSTER! THINGS COME INTO FOCUS! JELLIED OBJECTS SLOWLY FREEZE INTO SOLIDITY! A FIGURE BENDS OVER YOU, SHIELDING THE OVERHEAD GLARE FROM YOUR LIGHT-SENSITIVE EYES...

CAN YOU...CAN YOU SEE ME?
NOD YOUR HEAD IF YOU CAN!



YOU NOD YOUR HEAD, LOOKING UP AT THE FIGURE BENDING OVER YOU! HIS BEADY LITTLE EYES DANCE BEHIND THICK CRYSTAL-LIKE GLASSES! HE GRINS...

I *KNEW* IT! I *KNEW* I COULD DO IT! OH, WE WILL BE *FAMOUS*, YOU AND I! THE WORLD WILL *FLOCK* TO SEE US!



YOU LOOK AROUND! YOU ARE IN A SMALL INSTRUMENT-CLUTTERED ROOM! GLASS CABINETS FILLED WITH TEST-TUBES LINE THE WALLS! STRANGE SHAPED MACHINES SURROUND YOU! THE FIGURE STANDING OVER YOU PATS YOUR CHEST REASSURINGLY.

DON'T TRY TO *MOVE*! JUST *LIE* THERE! CAN YOU *TALK*? CAN YOU *SAY* ANYTHING?



YOU OPEN YOUR MOUTH! SOMEWHERE BACK UNDER THAT SEA OF BLACKNESS YOU HAVE JUST RISEN FROM IS THE MEMORY OF SPEECH! YOU OPEN YOUR MOUTH, BUT ONLY A CHOKING GURGLE SPILLS OUT...

THAT'S *ALL RIGHT*! DO NOT *WORRY*! YOU WILL *TALK AGAIN*! I WILL *TEACH* YOU! NOW... *REST*...



THE FIGURE WITH THE THICK GLASSES TURNS TO GO! HE MOVES THROUGH THE APPARATUS-CROWDED ROOM TO A DOOR AND OPENS IT! HE REACHES FOR A LIGHT SWITCH...

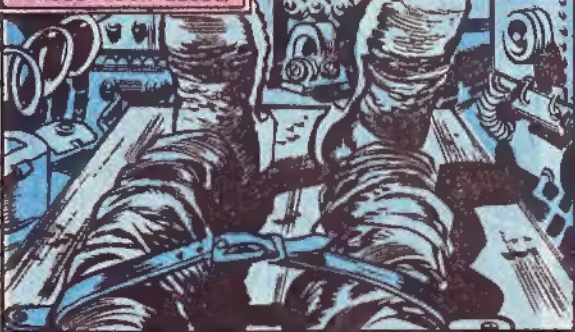
I WILL BE *BACK...LATER*! I MUST GO OUT *FRONT* NOW! IT IS TIME TO GIVE ANOTHER *SHOW*! *REST*! UNTIL *LATER*...



THE ROOM FALLS INTO DARKNESS AND HE GOES OUT! FOR A WHILE YOU JUST LIE THERE, SUCKING IN THE WARM AIR! THEN YOU TRY TO SIT UP! SOMETHING TIGHT ACROSS YOUR CHEST DIGS IN! YOU ARE STRAPPED DOWN...



YOU TRY TO MOVE YOUR ARMS! THE METAL BANDS ACROSS YOUR WRISTS HOLD THEM FAST! YOU CALL OUT, SURPRISED AT THE GARGLED SCREECHINESS OF YOUR OWN VOICE! YOU LOOK DOWN TOWARDS YOUR FEET...AT THE HEAVY SCUFFED SHOES AND THE BANDS ACROSS YOUR LEGS...



HOW DID YOU *GET* HERE? WHAT HAS *HAPPENED* TO YOU? WHAT IS THIS FIEND TRYING TO *DO* TO YOU *NOW*? A COLD CHILL OF FEAR SHIVERS OVER YOU! YOU TUG AND STRAIN! THE STRAPS ACROSS YOUR CHEST PART LIKE PAPER AND YOU SIT UP, TEARING YOUR ARMS LOOSE...YOUR LEGS...



YOU CRAWL THROUGH THE OPEN WINDOW OF THE ROOM OUT INTO THE NIGHT! THE COOL NIGHT, FILLED WITH A THOUSAND VOICES... A MILLION FLICKERING STARS! TO YOUR RIGHT, LIGHTS GLEAM BEHIND SILHOUETTED BUILDINGS...



PEOPLE...MANY PEOPLE...MOVE IN THE LIGHT...GAYLY LAUGHING... TALKING! SOMEWHERE, A CALLIOPE PLAYS...ITS MUSIC DRIFTING INTO THE DARKNESS! A HARSH VOICE CALLS...LURING...PROMISING...

HURRY...HURRY...
RIGHT THIS WAY! SEE
MARO'S WAX MUSEUM...
SEE THE CHAMBER
OF HORRORS...



YOU ARE IN THE REAR ALLEYS OF AN AMUSEMENT PARK! THE LIGHT AND THE LAUGHTER AND THE MUSIC AND THE VOICES SEEM TO DRAW YOU...LIKE A MAGNET! YOU MOVE TOWARD THEM...DOWN BETWEEN THE BUILDINGS...TOWARD THEM...



THEY'RE CLOSER NOW...THE LAUGHING PEOPLE! THEY MOVE PAST THE ALLEY...A SEA OF FACES...A SEA OF SMILES! AND NOW YOU'RE NEARLY THERE...NEARLY OUT OF THE ALLEY...NEARLY AMONG THEM...



THE WOMAN'S EYES BULGE IN HER BLANCHED FACE! SHE STARES AT YOU! HER HYSTERICAL SHRIEK IS LIKE A DOOR SLAMMING OUT THE LAUGHTER...THE VOICES... THE MUSIC! SILENCE FALLS...THICK...SAD SILENCE.



SUDDENLY THE DOOR IS OPENED ONCE MORE! ONLY THIS TIME THERE IS NO LAUGHTER...NO MUSIC! SHOUTS OF DISMAY...SCREAMS OF TERROR POUR IN AT YOU...



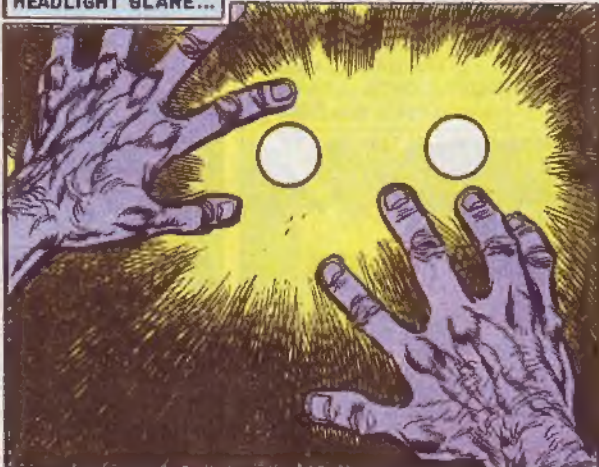
AGAIN, THAT CHILL OF FEAR KNIFES THROUGH YOU! YOU TURN...TURN FROM THE SHOUTS AND THE SCREAMS AND THE BULGING EYES AND BLANCHED FACES...AND YOU RUN...BACK UP THE ALLEY... BACK INTO THE BLACKNESS...



FOOTSTEPS CLATTER AFTER YOU, BUT THEY SOON FADE! THE AMUSEMENT PARK IS VERY FAR AWAY WHEN YOU FINALLY SLOW DOWN TO A WALK! YOU GASP FOR BREATH... AND YOUR HEART POUNDS IN YOUR CHEST LIKE A PISTON! YOU ARE ON A COUNTRY ROAD! THE RIBBON OF CONCRETE WINDS AWAY INTO THE DARKNESS! YOU MOVE ALONG IT...



BEHIND YOU, A GENTLE PURRING GROWS LOUDER AND LOUDER! A CAR! YOU TURN...FACING INTO THE ONCOMING HEADLIGHT GLARE...



THE CAR PULLS UP BESIDE YOU! THE DRIVER CALLS TO YOU...

WANT A RIDE INTO TOWN, BUD?



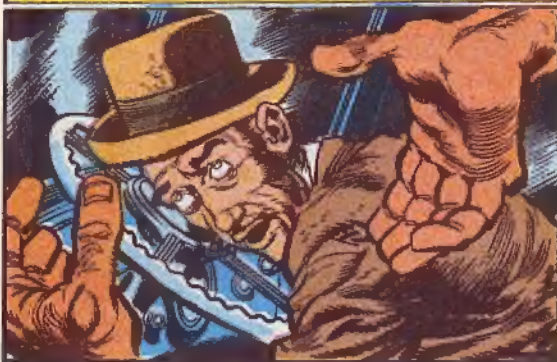
YOU OPEN THE DOOR! FOR A MOMENT HE LOOKS AT YOU, HORRIFIED! THEN HE SCREAMS...



WHY DO THEY SCREAM WHEN THEY SEE YOU? THAT FRIGHTENED, TERRIFYING SCREAMING! YOU WANT TO STOP IT! YOU GLAP YOUR HAND OVER HIS MOUTH! BUT HIS EYES STILL SCREAM...



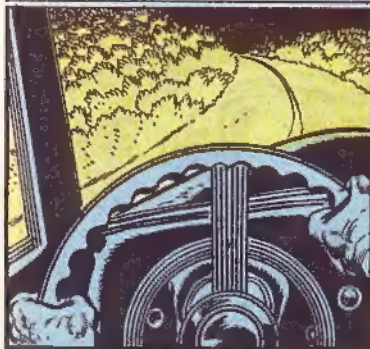
AND THEN HIS EYES GLAZE...AND ROLL...AND HE IS DEAD! HIS BODY GOES LIMP AND YOU LET IT SLIP AWAY FROM YOU LIKE A SOFT SACK! HE FALLS AGAINST THE STEERING WHEEL AND THE HORN BEGINS TO BLOW...A LONG MONOTONOUS MOAN...



YOU PULL HIM FROM THE CAR AND PUSH HIM TO THE SIDE OF THE ROAD...



THE CAR PURRS ALONG THE CONCRETE RIBBON SMOOTHLY! THE ROAD SLIPS FROM THE DARKNESS AHEAD INTO YOUR HEADLIGHT BEAM AND DOWN UNDER THE HUMMING WHEELS! SOON, HOUSES BEGIN TO APPEAR! YOU ARE COMING INTO TOWN! AND THINGS SEEM FAMILIAR TO YOU...



AND THEN YOU SEE IT! THE SMALL WHITE COTTAGE! YOUR FOOT DEPRESSES THE BRAKE PEDAL AUTOMATICALLY AS YOU SWING INTO THE DRIVEWAY! YOU'VE DONE IT A THOUSAND TIMES BEFORE! YOU KNOW IT...



YOU SLIP FROM THE CAR AND CROSS THE FRESHLY CUT LAWN! THE NAME ON THE SIGN STICKING AWKWARDLY IN THE SHRUB BED STRIKES A FAMILIAR NOTE! THE NAME! 'STONE'! SUDDENLY YOU REMEMBER! ARTHUR STONE! THAT'S WHO YOU ARE! AND NANCY... YOUR WIFE... SHE'S WAITING FOR YOU...



YOU HAMMER ANXIOUSLY ON THE NEAT CLEAN FRONT DOOR! UPSTAIRS, A LIGHT GOES ON! FOOT-STEPS DESCEND INSIDE... COMING CLOSER... COMING DOWN THE STEPS! THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN...



NANCY! EVEN NANCY LOOKS AT YOU LIKE THAT! THOSE EYES... THOSE WIDE, FRIGHTENED, TERRIFIED EYES! AND NOW SHE'S SCREAMING... SCREAMING LIKE THE OTHERS...



AND NOW SHE'S RUNNING UP THE STAIRS, SCREAMING! AND YOU'RE RUNNING AFTER HER... CALLING HER NAME! ONLY IT ISN'T HER NAME THAT ERUPTS FROM YOUR THROAT! IT'S A CHOKING, GARBLED, GUTTERAL SNARL...



AND NOW SHE'S IN THE BEDROOM, AND YOU'RE MOVING TOWARD HER... PLEADING! BUT THERE'S NO RECOGNITION IN HER EYES... ONLY WILD HYSTERIA! AND SHE'S BACKING AWAY... BACKING TOWARD THE OPEN WINDOW... TOWARD...



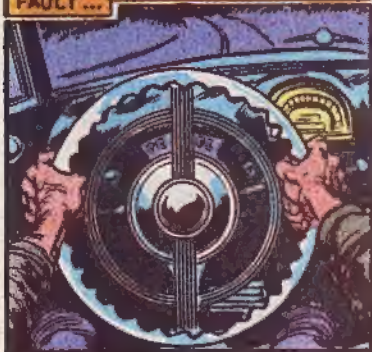
SUDDENLY SHE'S GONE...BACKWARDS...OUT THE WINDOW! AND HER SCREAM IS CUT SHORT BY THE DULL THUD AS HER FLAILING BODY HITS THE BACKYARD PATIO BELOW! YOU RUSH TO THE WINDOW...STARING DOWN AT HER...SOBBING...



WHEN YOU GET TO HER, SHE'S DEAD! HER LIFELESS EYES STILL STARE AT YOU IN GLAZED FEAR...



YOU STUMBLE TO THE CAR AND SPEED BACK TO THE CARNIVAL! THE MAN WITH THE BEADY EYES AND THE THICK GLASSES! HE'S DONE SOMETHING TO YOU! NANCY IS DEAD...AND IT'S HIS FAULT...



AND THEN YOU'RE SLIPPING BACK UP THE AMUSEMENT PARK ALLEY, INTO THE OPEN WINDOW...



YOU! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? THE PLACE IS CRAWLING WITH COPS! YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE ESCAPED!

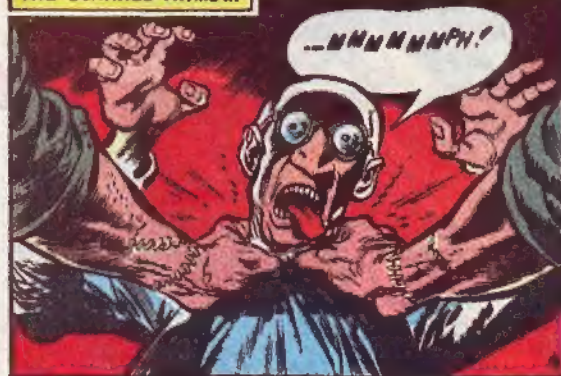
YOU'RE MINE! I MADE YOU! I KNEW I COULD DO IT...AND I DID! I TOOK PARTS OF BODIES... AND I PUT THEM TOGETHER! AND I TOOK A BRAIN...A BRAIN OF A MAN WHO DIED OUT THERE... IN MY WAX MUSEUM...A MAN NAMED ARTHUR STONE! HE DIED OF A HEART ATTACK... AND I TOOK HIS BRAIN...



I MADE YOU LIVE! I ALWAYS BELIEVED IT WAS POSSIBLE! OUT THERE...IN MY CHAMBER OF HORRORS...THERE'S A TABLEAU OF FRANKENSTEIN...AND HIS MONSTER! YOU'RE MY MONSTER...MY FRANKENSTEIN! WHAT AN EXHIBIT YOU'LL MAKE! I'LL BE FAMOUS! I'LL...I'LL...DON'T... LOOK AT ME...LIKE THAT! NO! EEEEE...



YOUR FINGERS CLOSE ABOUT HIS THROAT, CUTTING OFF HIS SCREAM! AND EVEN AS THE LIFE FADES FROM HIS TWITCHING BODY, YOU'RE STUDYING YOUR NEATLY STITCHED FINGERS... THE SEWN WRISTS... THE SCARRED ARMS...



AND THEN YOU STUMBLE FROM THE ROOM...INTO THE WAX MUSEUM...LEAVING HIS LIFELESS BODY SPRAWLED AMID THE EQUIPMENT...



THEN YOU'RE STARING AT THE TABLEAUS...BLOOD-GURDLING GROUPINGS OF HISTORIC HORROR SCENES...



...AND SUDDENLY YOU SEE IT! THE MOST REVOLTING SCENE OF ALL! A DISGUSTING MONSTER...A CON-GLAMORATION OF STITCHED FLESH...A LEERING REPULSIVE THING...STARING AT YOU...



THE FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER, NO DOUBT! YOU GLAP YOUR HANDS TO YOUR QUIVERING MOUTH AS THE NAUSEA SWEEPS OVER YOU...



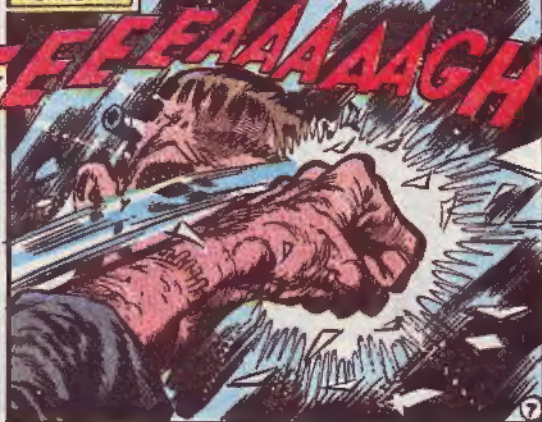
BUT THE MONSTER...THE MONSTER MOVES TOO!



A MIRROR! YOU'RE LOOKING INTO A MIRROR! THAT'S YOU IN THERE! THAT REPULSIVE, STITCHED-FLESHED, HIDEOUS MONSTER BEFORE YOU IS YOUR OWN REFLECTION...



YOU SMASH THE MIRROR INTO A THOUSAND GLIMMERING SHINING PIECES IN SHEER DISGUST AND HORROR...



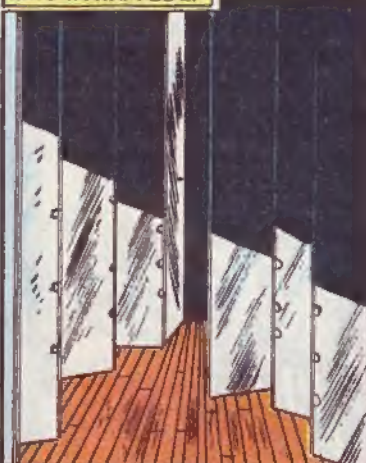
THEN YOU'RE RUNNING...SCREAMING...OUT IN THE MIDWAY...



THE CLATTER OF FOOTSTEPS IS RIGHT BEHIND YOU, AS YOU SWING INTO A DOORWAY...



YOU'RE IN A MAZE... A MAZE OF SMOOTH-WALLED DARK PASSAGEWAYS... TRAPPED...



SUDDENLY, THE PASSAGeways ARE FLOODED IN BRILLIANT LIGHT! FIGURES LEAP AT YOU FROM ALL SIDES... HORRIBLE, DISFIGURED, STITCHED-FLESHED FIGURES...

A HALL OF MIRRORS!



...AND NO MATTER WHICH WAY YOU TURN, YOUR MADDENING REVOLTING REFLECTION GLARES AT YOU... SHOUTS AT YOU... SHRIEKS AT YOU IN UTTER REVULSION...



UNTIL...WHEN THEY FIND YOU...THE LIFE LENT TO YOUR MONSTROUS SKIN-SEWN BODY HAS FADED...ESCAPED FROM EACH COUNTLESS LONG DEAD SECTION...SUBTRACTED FROM THE SUM-PRODUCT OF HORROR THAT ADDED UP TO YOU...DRIVEN FROM YOU BY THE MADNESS OF YOUR OWN IMAGE...

THAT'S HIM!

HE'S DEAD!

GOOD LORD!



HEH, HEH! YEP, KIDDIES! AS THEY ALWAYS SAY...IF LOOKS COULD KILL...! WELL, IN THIS CASE...THEY DID! I HOPE YOU LIKED TAKING THE PART OF THE MONSTER IN THIS STORY! I ALSO HOPE...HEH, HEH...THAT IT DIDN'T AFFECT YOU! IF I WERE YOU, I'D JUST GO ON TO THE VAULT-KEEPER'S TALE! I WOULDN'T...

ER... LOOK IN THE MIRROR RIGHT NOW! YOU MIGHT SEE SOMETHING YOU'LL WISH YOU HADN'T! HEY, WAIT! OKAY! BUT DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU! 'BYE, NOW', DIG YOU LATER!



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! NOW THAT THE *CRYPT-KEEPER* HAS FINISHED DISHING OUT HIS OLD OIL, IT'S MY TURN TO ENTERTAIN YOU FIENDS! WELCOME ONCE MORE TO THE VAULT OF HORROR! THIS IS YOUR VAULT-KEEPER, WITH ANOTHER HORROR YARN FROM MY COLLECTION! AND THIS ONE IS ABOUT OIL... BLACK, GOOEY, UGHEY OIL! I CALL THIS BLOOD-CURDLING HAIR-RAISER...

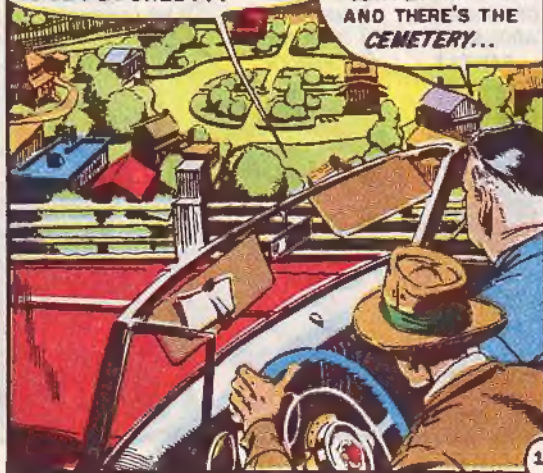
OIL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL!



THE FLASHY CONVERTIBLE CAME TO A STOP AT A POINT ON THE HIGHWAY OVERLOOKING THE SPRAWLING MIDWESTERN TOWN! THE TWO MEN IN THE CAR LOOKED DOWN AT THE ROOFTOPS AND SMILED...

WELL, PHIL! THERE SHE IS... WAITING FOR US... LIKE A SITTING DUCK... WAITING TO BE PLUCKED...

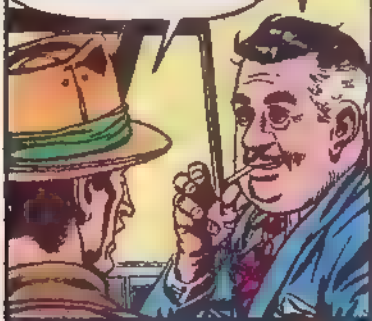
THERE'S THE PARK... DOWN THERE IN THE CENTER OF TOWN... AND THERE'S THE CEMETERY...



THE DRIVER TURNED TO THE ONE WITH THE CIGARETTE BETWEEN HIS LIPS...

LOOK, PHIL! HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU NOT TO TALK WITH THAT BUTT DANGLING FROM YOUR MOUTH? IT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD.

HUH? OH! I'M SORRY, SAM! I FORGOT.



WELL, DON'T FORGET! AFTER ALL! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE AN HONEST BUSINESS-MAN! YOU LOOK LIKE A SHARPPY WHEN YOU DO THAT!

OKAY! OKAY! DON'T GET EXCITED, SAM! I'LL BE CAREFUL!



THE CAR CONTINUED ON DOWN THE HIGHWAY! FINALLY, IT PULLED UP BEFORE THE ONE HOTEL IN TOWN...

ALL RIGHT! ON YOUR TOES! HERE WE GO! I'LL START GETTING THE GRIPS OUT! YOU CHECK IN!

RIGHT, SAM!



THE ONE NAMED SAM STARTED TO UNLOAD THE LUGGAGE FROM THE FLASHY CONVERTIBLE WHILE THE OTHER ONE... PHIL... ENTERED THE HOTEL AND CROSSED THE LOBBY TO THE DESK...

HOWDY, STRANGER! WHAT CAN I DO FOR YUH?

I'D LIKE TWO ROOMS... ONE FOR MYSELF AND ONE FOR MY FIELD MAN!



FIELD MAN? WHAT'S THAT?

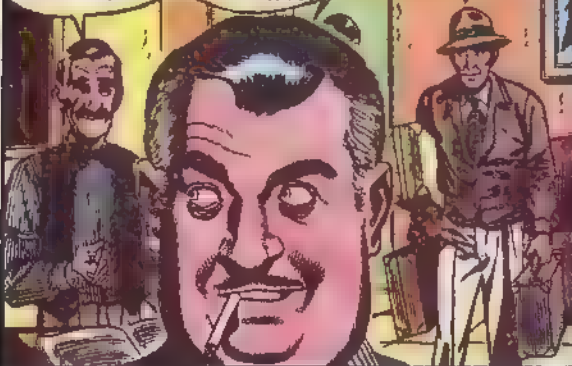
ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF! MY NAME IS PHILIP GARSON! OIL'S MY BUSINESS! I LOCATE OIL DEPOSITS FOR BIG OIL COMPANIES! MY FIELD MAN, MR. SIMPSON, HANDLES THE GENERAL SURVEYING OF PROSPECTIVE SITES! WE'RE JUST PASSING THROUGH!



OIL, EH? SIGN HERE! THINKIN' OF LOOKIN' AROUND THESE PARTS?

THANK YOU! ER... NO! WE'RE ON OUR WAY NORTH...

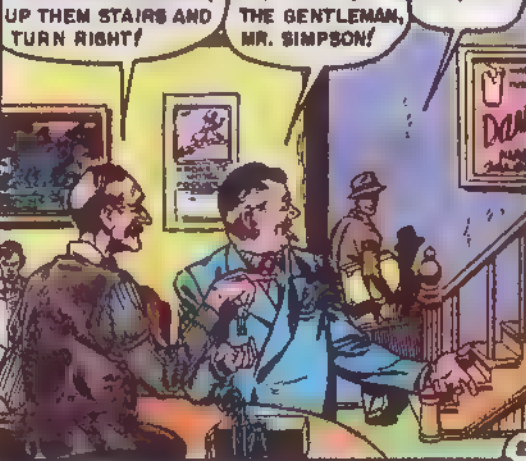
WHERE SHALL I PUT THE LUGGAGE, MR. GARSON!



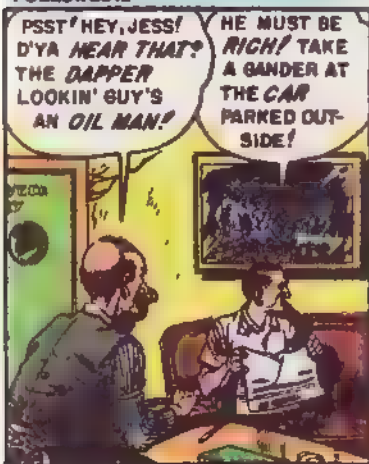
ROOMS 201 AND 202, UP THEM STAIRS AND TURN RIGHT!

YOU HEARD THE GENTLEMAN, MR. SIMPSON!

YES, SIR!



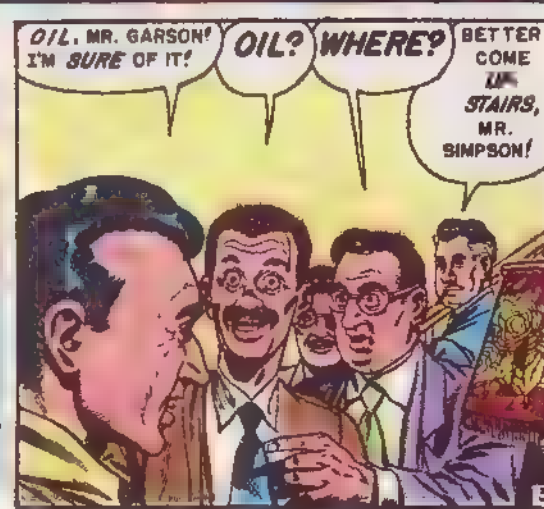
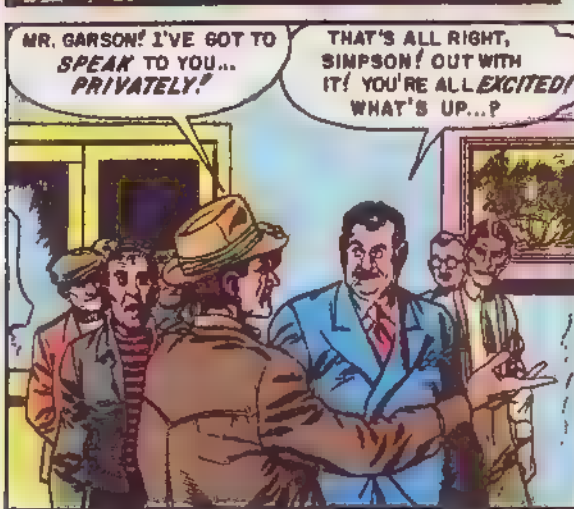
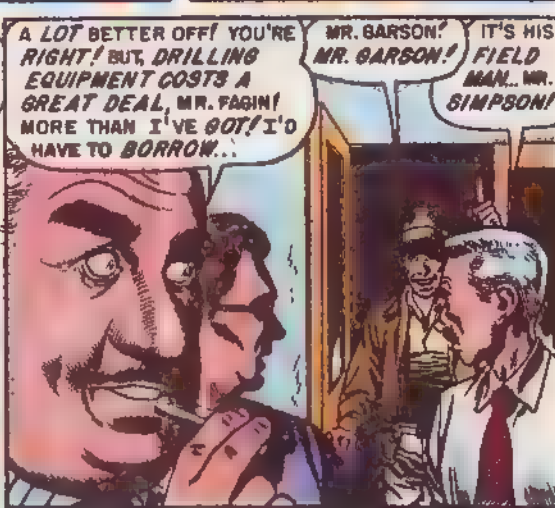
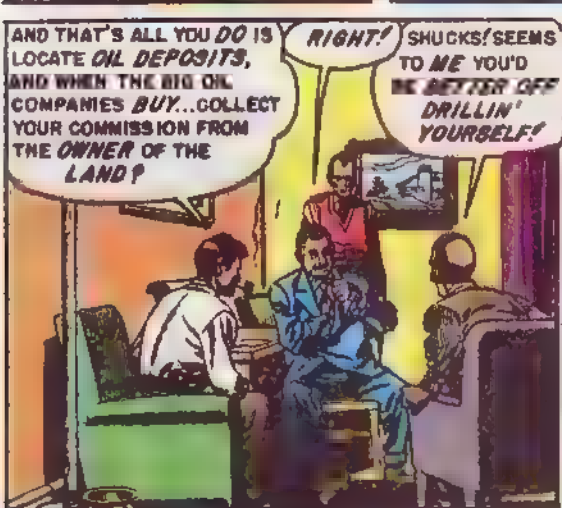
THE MAN BEHIND THE DESK
WATCHED AS SAM CARRIED THE
LUGGAGE UP THE STAIRS AND PHIL
FOLLOWED...



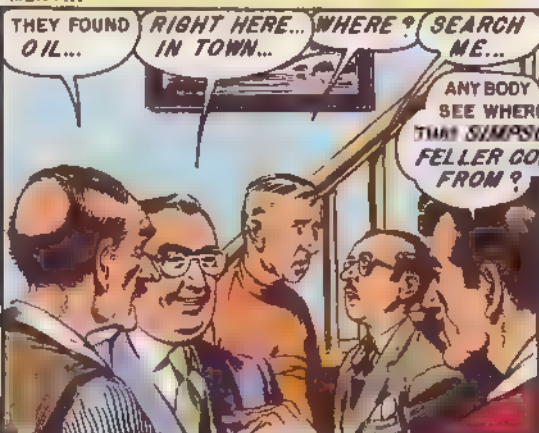
UPSTAIRS...OUT OF EARSHOT...
SAM WHISPERED ANGRILY TO PHIL...



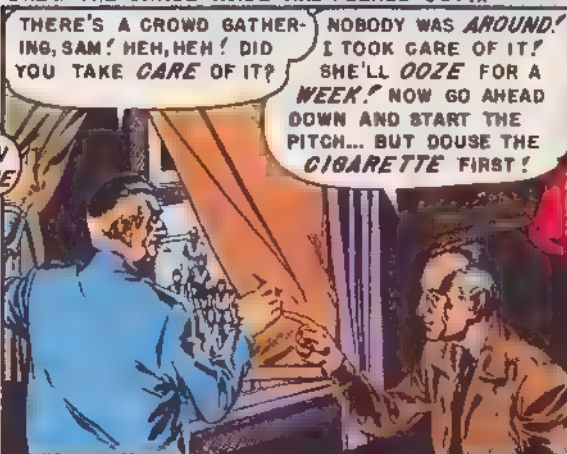
LATER...AS NIGHT CAME ON...IN THE
HOTEL LOBBY...



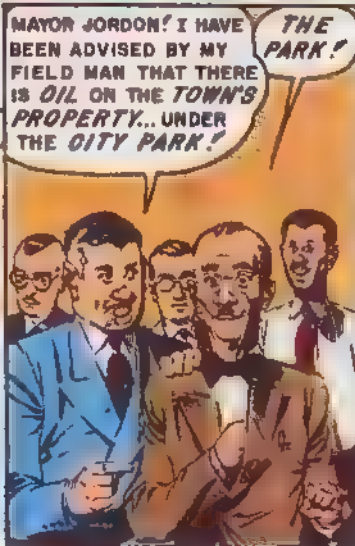
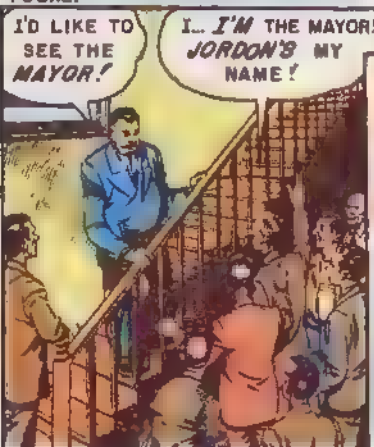
SAM FOLLOWED PHIL UP THE STAIRS! BEHIND THEM THE HOTEL LOBBY BUZZED WITH EXCITEMENT...



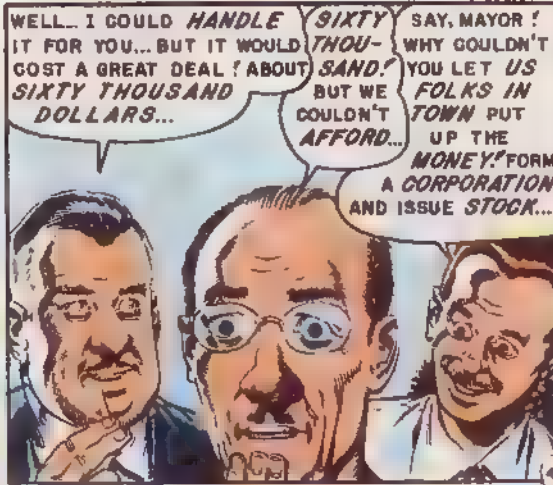
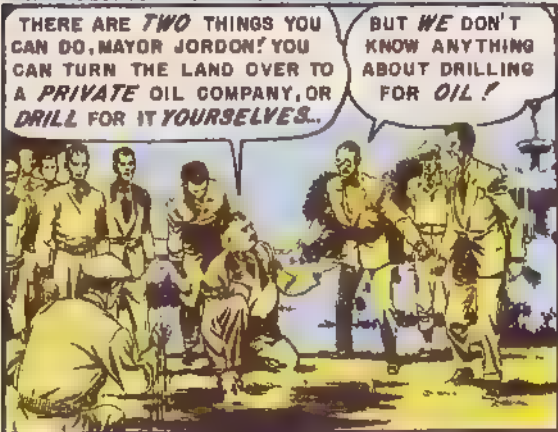
UPSTAIRS IN THE ROOM, THE TWO MEN SMILED! PHIL DREW THE SHADE ASIDE AND PEERED OUT...



FIVE MINUTES LATER, PHIL CAME DOWNSTAIRS! THE LOBBY OF THE HOTEL WAS JAMMED WITH TOWN-FOLK...



THE CROWD STOOD AROUND THE BLACK SLICK THAT SEEPED FROM THE GROUND IN THE PARK...



MAYOR JORDON TURNED TO THE CROWD...

WHAT DO YOU SAY, FOLKS? DO WE TURN THE LAND OVER TO A PRIVATE COMPANY, OR RAISE THE MONEY AND DRILL FOR THE OIL OURSELVES...?

OUR-SELVES! YEAH! LET'S KEEP IT IN THE FAMILY!



LATER, IN THE HOTEL ROOM...

THEY FELL FOR IT, SAM! THEY'RE GOING TO FORM A CORPORATION AND ISSUE STOCK! I'VE BEEN PUT IN CHARGE OF THE DRILLING!

GOOD! NOW AS SOON AS THEY TURN THE MONEY OVER TO US, WE'LL PULL THE ROUTINE...

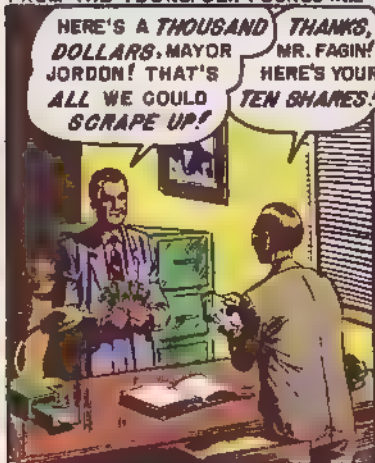


A CORPORATION WAS FORMED! STOCK WAS ISSUED! SUBSCRIPTIONS FROM THE TOWNSFOLK POURED IN...

FINALLY...

WELL, MR. GARSON! THE STOCK ISSUE HAS BEEN SOLD... EVERY LAST SHARE! HERE'S A CHECK... FOR SIXTY THOUSAND DOLLARS!

GOOD! NOW, WE CAN START THE DRILLING...



HERE'S A THOUSAND DOLLARS, MAYOR JORDON! THAT'S ALL WE COULD SCRAPE UP! THANKS, MR. FAGIN! HERE'S YOUR TEN SHARES!



THEN...

HERE'S THE DOUGH, SAM! I JUST CASHED THE CHECK! WHY DON'T WE SKIP TOWN AND FORGET THE CEMETERY ROUTINE...

NO! WE'LL WANT TO WORK THIS DEAL AGAIN! YOU'VE GOT TO BE KEPT IN THE CLEAR! THE CEMETERY ROUTINE STAYS!



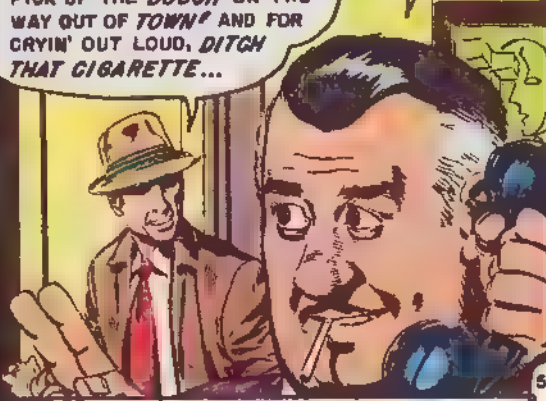
AND JUST TO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T FORGET TO COME AND DIG ME UP, I'LL HIDE THE DOUGH! NOW GIVE ME ONE OF THOSE PILLS, AND PHONE THE MAYOR! YOU KNOW WHAT TO SAY!

HERE Y'ARE...



S' LONG! DON'T FORGET! DIG ME UP WITHIN SIX HOURS AFTER THEY BURY ME! WE'LL PICK UP THE DOUGH ON THE WAY OUT OF TOWN! AND FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD, DITCH THAT CIGARETTE...

HUH! OH...I FORGOT! S' LONG, SAM!



MAYOR JORDON RUSHED TO PHIL GARSON'S HOTEL ROOM IN ANSWER TO HIS FRANTIC PHONE CALL...

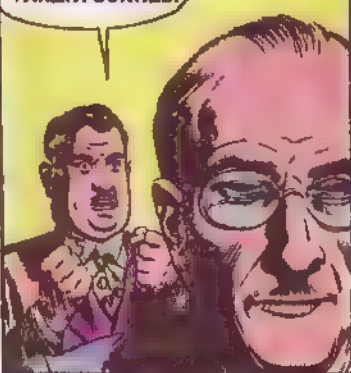
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, THE OIL DEPOSIT'S A PHONY?

IT'S TRUE! WHEN I FOUND SIMPSON... MY FIELD MAN... GONE, AND THE DRILLING MONEY GONE TOO, I CHECKED!

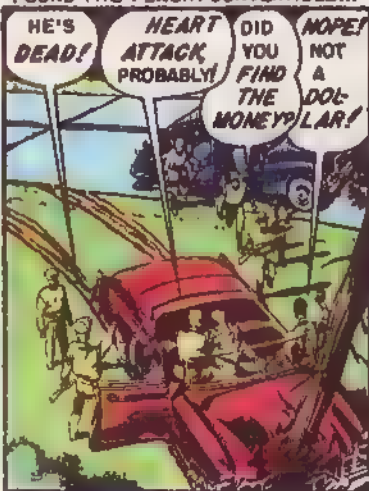


HE POURED OIL INTO THAT SANDY SPOT IN THE PARK! THERE'S NO OIL UNDER THERE! WE'VE BEEN TAKEN! CONNED!

WE'LL GET HIM! HE WON'T GET FAR!



JUST OUTSIDE OF TOWN, THEY FOUND THE FLASHY CONVERTIBLE...



HE'S DEAD!

HEART ATTACK, PROBABLY!

DID YOU FIND THE MONEY? NOPE! NOT A DOLLAR!

PHIL GARSON WAS QUESTIONED CAREFULLY...

I... I TRUSTED HIM! HE'D BEEN WITH ME ALMOST A YEAR! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! FIRST, LYING ABOUT THE OIL... THEN STEALING THE MONEY... AND NOW THIS! DEAD! I'M... I'M SO SORRY FOR ALL THE FOLKS THAT TRUSTED ME!

IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT! DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT HE MIGHT HAVE DONE WITH THE MONEY, MR. GARSON?



DIDN'T HE HAVE IT WITH HIM?

NO! WE SEARCHED CAREFULLY! HIS CLOTHES... THE CAR! HE PROBABLY HID IT SOMEWHERE PLANNING TO COME BACK AND GET IT! NOW, IT'S LOST... FOR GOOD!



I'D LIKE TO CLAIM HIS BODY... YOU KNOW... GIVE HIM A DECENT BURIAL!

OF COURSE, MR. GARSON! I'LL GIVE YOU A RELEASE!



AND SO, THAT AFTERNOON, SAM SIMPSON WAS BURIED! NATURALLY, PHIL HAD MADE SURE THAT SAM'S BODY WAS NOT FINGERED...



AND WHEN THE EFFECTS OF THE PILL SAM HAD TAKEN WORE OFF, HE WOKE UP SIX FEET UNDER THE EARTH...

WHAT'S THAT? SOMETHING STICKY...OOZING INTO THE COFFIN! MUDDY WATER! SMELLS FUNNY...



THE WARM THICK LIQUID CONTINUED TO SEEP INTO THE COFFIN AS THE HOURS DRAGGED BY...

PHIL WILL BE HERE SOON! HE'LL DIG ME UP! PHEW! THAT SMELL!



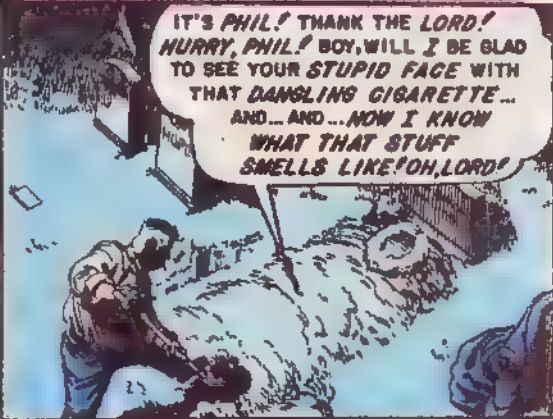
THE OOZE PUDDLED HIGHER AND HIGHER IN THE COFFIN! IT ROSE ABOVE SAM'S EARS...

PHIL! FOR PETE'S SAKE! HURRY...BEFORE I DROWN! WHAT IS THAT ODOOR?



SAM WAS PRESSING HIS FACE AGAINST THE SATIN LID OF THE COFFIN, SUCKING AT THE LAST TRACES OF AIR WHEN THE DIGGING SOUNDED FROM ABOVE...

IT'S PHIL! THANK THE LORD! HURRY, PHIL! BOY, WILL I BE GLAD TO SEE YOUR STUPID FACE WITH THAT DANGLING CIGARETTE... AND... AND... NOW I KNOW WHAT THAT STUFF SMELLS LIKE! OH, LORD!



AND AS PHIL LIFTED THE LID OF THE COFFIN, SAM GAZED AT HIM, HIS BLACK SHINING FACE ARISING FROM THE SURFACE OF THE OOZE-FILLED COFFIN...

IT'S OIL... PHIL!

HUH?



THE CIGARETTE DANGLING FROM PHIL'S MOUTH DROPPED INTO THE THICK BLACK OIL AS HIS JAW FELL OPEN IN ASTONISHMENT! SUDDENLY, THERE WAS A BLINDING WHITE FLASH...



HEH, HEH! YEP! PHIL FORGOT AGAIN! ONLY THIS TIME, SAM BLEW UP! OF COURSE PHIL WENT TO PIECES OVER HIS BAD HABIT, TOO! BUT THE LITTLE TOWN GOT ITS OIL BOOM AFTER ALL! THE SIXTY GRAND SAM HAD HIDDEN WAS NEVER FOUND!

THEY TORE THE FLASHY CONVERTIBLE TO BITS LOOKING FOR IT! WANNA BUY A CAR ON THE INSTALLMENT PLAN... A BIT AT A TIME? 'BYE, NOW! SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAG, THE VAULT OF HORROR!



LOVE STORY



I met Negra in my last year at medical school. She had come to the university that year to study medicine as an exchange student from Mecklenburg, Germany.

Dr. Justin McGill was presenting an exhibit in his field of hemopathy, pertaining to any of the diseases of the blood, and as I was quite interested in this study, I spent much of my free time assisting him in preparing slides of blood smears.

I had just come from the university hospital with a fresh specimen of blood taken from a patient who was a "bleeder", one in whom the constituents of fibrin do not exist in proper proportion or proper quantity, thus preventing a clot to form when bleeding takes place. Many afflicted with this blood deficiency have bled to death from a simple scratch!

Dr. McGill was conducting his hemocytology class when I entered his laboratory. I took a microscope from a wall cabinet and set it up on a table at the back of the room. I placed a few drops of the "bleeder's" non-coagulated blood on a slide and proceeded to study it under high-power.

I raised my head slowly from the eyepiece when a soft voice said in careful, precise English, "May I look at your slide?". It was a girl with raven-black hair and inquisitive dark eyes. Her face was as pale as her neatly starched laboratory frock.

She looked into my microscope. In a few seconds she said, "Hemophilia! Delayed clotting of the blood and consequent difficulty in checking hemorrhage!"

"Right!", I added, surprised at her rapid cell-detection. "It's a congenital condition inherited by males through the mother as a sex-linked character."

"I feel so sorry for the people who are afflicted with it! They can't live a normal life... they have to be so careful!! There are so many strange conditions of the blood which are passed on from generation to generation", she said feebly. I thought she was just another medical student going through the usual stages of text-book hypochondria.

I soon learned that Negra was Dr. McGill's best student. She seemed obsessed with a morbid curiosity about blood. Whenever I worked in the lab, or classified types in the plasma depository, she would come to talk to me.

One day she came into the blood bank, her face more blanched than usual. I told her that she was studying too hard and required more rest. I left her in charge of the bank while I went to the medical building to see a dying friend who was wasting away from no visible disease. Incidentally, this poor fellow was a classmate and an acquaintance of Negra's!

When I came back to relieve Negra, there was a red healthy glow to her face!

A few days later, my moribund friend expired. An autopsy showed a definite pernicious anemia. Half of the blood-content of his body had dried up in the course of a few weeks. Only a month before, he had undergone a complete physical and was found well and robust! As an added shock, I found a shortage of some forty-two pints in the blood bank!!

That night, I took Negra to town to see a movie. We were returning about midnight when my car was stalled by a sudden rain-storm... wet wires! Negra and I sat in the front seat, watching the rain pounding on the hood and windshield. Soon I began to doze off... but I didn't sleep very long! I was jolted upright by long, deep, gurgling, frenzied, inhaling sounds!!

I turned towards Negra. Her lips were bloody and her mouth was stretched over the alabaster-white surface of her writhing right forearm! She was swallowing her own blood as fast as she could draw it into her spastically contracting cheeks. But she could never satiate her lustful thirst for as she grew stronger, she also grew weaker! As she gained blood, she also lost blood!

Now all was clear to me! Negra had inherited Vampirism as an old family trait. I had read of the ancient blood-suckers of Mecklenburg! When the rain stopped, I set my car... and Negra... ablaze. She would find sweet innocent rest at last!

But why hadn't she inflicted her blood-sucking upon me? Could it be that Negra, the reluctant vampire, was in love with me??

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S GRIM FAIRY TALE!

I CALL THIS NAUSEATING NURSERY NOVELETTE...

ATTACKS OF HORROR!



ONCE UPON A TIME . LONG, LONG AGO... THERE WAS A TINY SEASIDE KINGDOM GOVERNED BY A FAT KING WHO WAS MAD ABOUT MONEY...

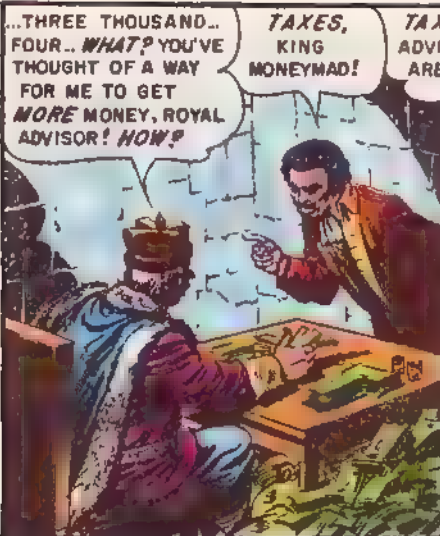
ONE THOUSAND... TWO THOUSAND...
THREE THOUSAND... FOUR THOUSAND...
FIVE...

**KING
MONEYMAD!
KING
MONEYMAD!**

CAN'T YOU SEE I'M COUNTING MY MONEY, ROYAL ADVISOR? I TOLD YOU NEVER TO INTERRUPT ME WHEN I'M COUNTING MY MONEY! NOW I'LL HAVE TO BEGIN ALL OVER AGAIN! ONE THOUSAND... TWO...

BUT KING MONEYMAD! I'VE GOT IT! I'VE GOT IT! A WAY FOR YOU TO GET MORE MONEY!





...THREE THOUSAND... FOUR... *WHAT?* YOU'VE THOUGHT OF A WAY FOR ME TO GET MORE MONEY, ROYAL ADVISOR! *HOW?*

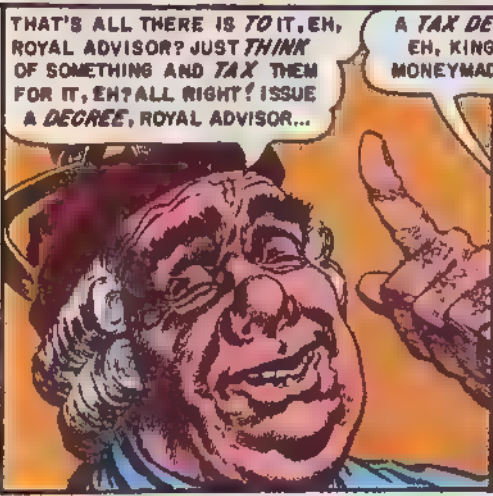
TAXES, KING MONEYMAD!

TAXES, ROYAL ADVISOR? WHAT ARE TAXES?

YOU CHARGE PEOPLE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF MONEY PER YEAR FOR SOMETHING! THAT'S CALLED A TAX!

WELL, *WHAT* DO YOU TAX PEOPLE **FOR**, ROYAL ADVISOR?

ANYTHING! YOU JUST *THINK* OF A THING AND TAX THEM FOR IT!



THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT, EH, ROYAL ADVISOR? JUST *THINK* OF SOMETHING AND TAX THEM FOR IT, EH? ALL RIGHT! ISSUE A **DEGREE**, ROYAL ADVISOR...

A TAX DEGREE, EH, KING MONEYMAD?

A TAX DEGREE! YES! TO ALL THE TITLED PEOPLE IN MY KINGDOM... **COUNTS, DUKES, LORDS, EARLS, ETC!**... FOR USING THEIR TITLES, I TAX THEM **89,000 PIECES OF GOLD** A YEAR!

SORT OF A 'SIR TAX', EH, KING MONEYMAD? **GOOD!** I WILL ISSUE THE DEGREE **IMMEDIATELY!**



AND SO, FAT KING MONEYMAD LEARNED ABOUT TAXES! HIS 'SIR TAX' WAS A COMPLETE SUCCESS! MONEY POURED INTO THE ROYAL TREASURY FROM ANGRY TITLE-HOLDERS ALL OVER THE KINGDOM...

SEVEN THOUSAND... EIGHT THOUSAND... NINE THOUSAND... TEN...

KING MONEYMAD! KING MONEYMAD!

ROYAL ADVISOR! HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU NOT TO INTERRUPT ME WHEN I'M COUNTING MY MONEY! NOW WHERE WAS I...?

KING MONEYMAD! ALL TITLEHOLDERS HAVE PAID THEIR 'SIR TAX'! THERE WON'T BE ANY MORE MONEY COMING IN! *THINK* OF SOMETHING...



TAKE A DECREE, ROYAL ADVISOR! TO ALL OWNERS OF BOATS! A TAX OF THREE PIECES OF GOLD PER SQUARE YARD OF CANVAS IS HEREBY LEVIED!

'SAILS TAX,' EH, KING? GOOD! I'LL ISSUE THE DECREE, IMMEDIATELY!



AND SO THE 'SAILS TAX' WAS LEVIED! IRATE FISHERMEN PROTESTED... BUT TO NO AVAIL...

BUT I HAVE SIXTY SQUARE YARDS OF SAILS! MY FAMILY WILL STARVE!

180 PIECES OF GOLD... OR ELSE...



...AND MONEY POURED INTO THE ROYAL TREASURY...

TWELVE THOUSAND ... THIRTEEN THOUSAND ... FOURTEEN ...

KING MONEYMAD! KING MONEYMAD!



ROYAL ADVISOR! HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU... OH... WHAT'S THE USE? WHAT IS IT NOW?

IT'S THE 'SAILS TAX,' KING MONEYMAD! ALL SAILS HAVE BEEN TAXED! NO MORE MONEY WILL BE COMING IN! NOW WHAT?



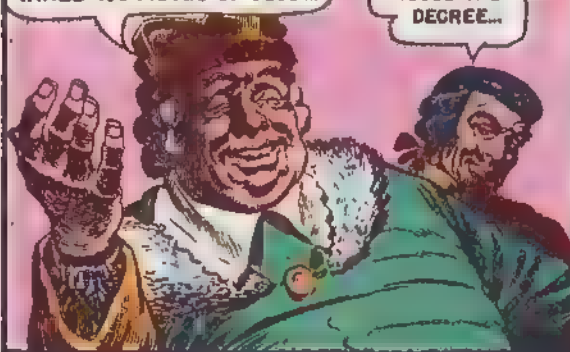
ARE THOSE GYPSIES STILL WANDERING AROUND THE KINGDOM, ROYAL ADVISOR? THE ONES THAT TELL FORTUNES...

YES, KING MONEYMAD!



TAKE A DECREE, ROYAL ADVISOR! BECAUSE THERE ARE TOO MANY FORTUNE TELLERS IN THE KINGDOM, EACH ONE IS TAXED 100 PIECES OF GOLD...

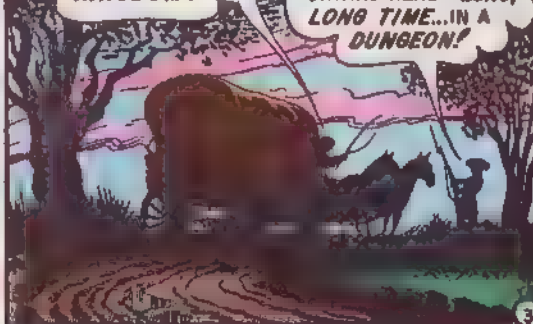
'EXCESS PROPHETS TAX,' EH, KING? GOOD! I'LL ISSUE THE DECREE...



AND SO THE 'EXCESS PROPHETS TAX' WAS LEVIED! ANGRY GYPSY FORTUNE TELLERS PROTESTED... BUT TO NO AVAIL...

BUT I WAS JUST ON MY WAY OUT OF THE KINGDOM!

100 PIECES OF GOLD, OR YOU'LL BE STAYING HERE A LONG, LONG TIME... IN A DUNGEON!



KING MONEYMAD'S MADNESS FOR MONEY GREW AND GREW AS MORE AND MORE POURED INTO HIS TREASURY! THE MORE HE GOT, THE MORE HE WANTED...

TAKE A DECREE, ROYAL ADVISOR! ANYONE WHO OWNS A *FISHING ROD* IS TAXED 90 PIECES OF GOLD...

'POLE TAX', EH, KING...

NOW... KING MONEYMAD'S KINGDOM WAS A *FISHING KINGDOM*! SINCE IT WAS LOCATED BY THE SEA, MANY PEOPLE HAD *FISHING RODS*! SO, WHEN THE '*POLE TAX*' WAS LEVIED...

KING MONEYMAD HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH!

NINETY PIECES OF GOLD FOR A *FISHING POLE*...

HE'S TAXING US INTO POVERTY...



BUT THE PEOPLE OF THE KINGDOM WHO OWNED *FISHING RODS* PAID THEIR '*POLE TAX*' ANYWAY...

THIRTY-FIVE THOUSAND...
THIRTY-SIX THOUSAND...
THIRTY-SEVEN...

KING MONEYMAD!
KING MONEYMAD!



NOW WHAT?

THE '*POLE TAX*' HAS BEEN COMPLETELY COLLECTED! GOT ANY IDEAS?



TAKE A DECREE! TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE *RUGS* IN THEIR HOMES...

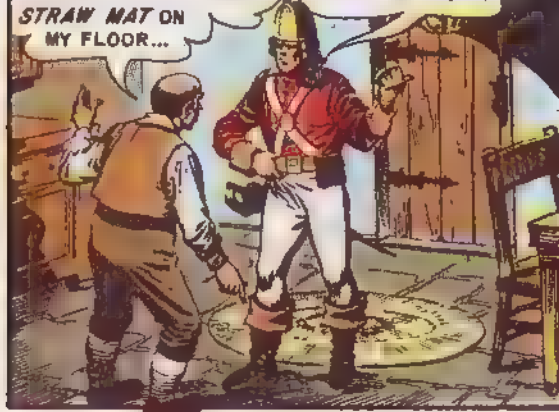
'CARPET TAX', EH?



THE PEOPLE OF KING MONEYMAD'S KINGDOM WERE FURIOUS...

30 PIECES OF GOLD BECAUSE I HAVE THAT *STRAW MAT* ON MY FLOOR...

A *CARPET* IS A *CARPET*! PAY UP OR ELSE...



PRACTICALLY *EVERYONE* HAD AT LEAST A *MAT* ON THEIR FLOOR! THOSE WHO COULDN'T PAY WERE DRAGGED OFF TO PRISON...

DADDY! DADDY!

NO! NO! DON'T TAKE MY HUSBAND AWAY!

YOU'LL HAVE TO PAY THE '*CARPET TAX*', LADY! WHEN IT'S PAID, HE'LL BE RELEASED!



THE MONEY CONTINUED TO POUR
INTO KING MONEYMAD'S TREASURY
SIXTY-EIGHT
THOUSAND...
SIXTY-NINE...

KING
MONEYMAD!

ALL RIGHT,
ROYAL ADVISOR!
WHAT'S THE
BAD NEWS?

THE 'CARPET
TAX!' IT'S ALL
PAID UP!

THEN TAKE THIS DECREE,
ROYAL ADVISOR! A TAX
OF 20 PIECES OF GOLD
EACH IS HEREBY LEVIED
ON EVERY THUMB IN
THE LAND...

'THUMB
TAX!'

THIS TAX... THE 'THUMB TAX'... WAS THE LAST STRAW!
THE PEOPLE HAD BEEN TAXED UNTIL THEY COULD
PAY NO MORE...

THEY HAVE NO MORE
MONEY, KING MONEYMAD!
THEY CANNOT PAY THE
'THUMB TAX'!

IF THEY CAN'T PAY THE
'THUMB TAX'... THEN THEY
CAN'T HAVE THEIR
THUMBS! TAKE A
DECREE!

WHAT DOES
IT SAY?

IT SAYS THAT THE 'THUMB TAX'
MUST BE PAID, OR THE THUMBS
WILL BE REMOVED!

GASP!

THOSE WHO COULD NOT PAY WERE LINED UP OUTSIDE
THE PALACE! THE LINE WAS VERY LONG! KING MONEY-
MAD SAT IN THE PALACE COURTYARD NEXT TO THE AXE-
MAN...

ALL RIGHT! BRING THEM IN...
ONE AT A TIME...

THE KING SAYS
BRING THEM IN...
ONE AT A TIME...

THE FIRST MAN WAS DRAGGED TO THE CHOPPING
BLOCK...

FOR NOT PAYING YOUR
THUMB TAX, YOU MUST
LOSE YOUR THUMBS...

NO! MERCY!
MERCY!

THE AXEMAN'S AXE FELL! THE MAN SCREAMED...



OUTSIDE THE CASTLE, THE PEOPLE ON LINE STARED AT EACH OTHER IN DISBELIEF...

HE'S REALLY GOING THROUGH WITH IT!

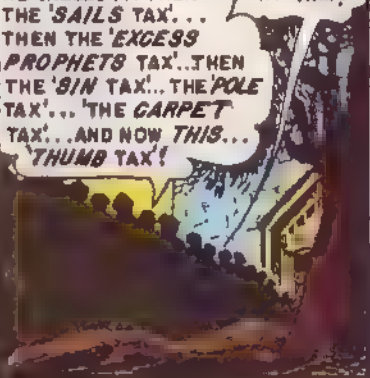
HE'S MAD!



THE LINE BEGAN TO MOVE! THE AXEMAN'S AXE ROSE AND FELL AGAIN AND AGAIN...

FIRST HE TAXED THE NOBILITY! 'SIR TAX' HE CALLED IT! THEN THE 'SAILS TAX'... THEN THE 'EXCESS PROPHETS TAX'... THEN THE 'SIN TAX'... THE 'POLE TAX'... THE 'CARPET TAX'... AND NOW THIS... 'THUMB TAX'!

SOMEBODY OUGHT TO TAX HIM!



THE LINE CONTINUED TO MOVE! THE AXEMAN'S AXE ROSE AND FELL! SCREAMS ECHOED IN THE COURTYARD! OUTSIDE... THE LINE BEGAN TO GABBLE... THEN SHOUT! SUDDENLY...

LET'S GET HIM!

WE'VE BEEN TAXED ENOUGH!

LET'S TAX HIM!



THE CROWD STORMED INTO THE COURTYARD, SEIZING THE KING! SOMEBODY GRABBED THE AXEMAN'S AXE.

STOP THIS! STOP THIS! I AM YOUR KING!

AND YOUR PEOPLE HAVE DECIDED TO TAX YOU... YOUR MAJESTY...



THE CROWD MOVED IN! THE AXE WAS RAISED! THE KING SCREAMED! THE CROWD CHEERED! THE AXE FELL! SOMEBODY BENT AND PICKED IT UP FOR ALL TO SEE... A BAG-LIKE, YELLOWISH, BLOOD-STAINED FORM...

...CORPORATION TAX!



HEH, HEH! AND THAT'S MY GRIM FAIRY TALE FOR THIS ISSUE, KIDDIES! THE PEOPLE SUFFERED KING MONEYMAD'S TAXATION UNTIL THEY COULDN'T STOMACH IT ANY LONGER... AND THEN THEY TOOK KING MONEYMAD'S... STOMACH, THAT IS! GRIM? THAT'S THE IDEA! HEH, HEH! NOW... IF YOU'LL SHIFT YOUR EYES RIGHT... TO THE



OLD WITCH... SHE'LL WIND UP MY MAB WITH A SERVING FROM HER GAULDRON! GET THE BIGARD READY! BYE NOW!

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! YEP, KIDDIES, IT'S YOUR HOSTESS IN *THE HAUNT OF FEAR*, *THE OLD WITCH*, STIRRING HER CAULDRON AGAIN, READY TO SERVE YOU ANOTHER *HORROR HELPING*. THE REEKING RECIPE I'VE COOKED UP THIS TIME WAS *FIRST* DISHED OUT BY A VERY DEAR *FIEND* OF MINE, AMERICA'S FOREMOST FANTASY WRITER, *RAY BRADBURY*! SO, TUCK YOUR *DROOL CUPS* UNDER YOUR CHINS, AND I'LL FEED YOU MY ADAPTATION OF MR. BRADBURY'S...

**THERE WAS AN
OLD WOMAN!**



THE TALL DARK YOUNG MAN STOOD QUIETLY, NOT MOVING. AUNT TILDY SHOOK HER HEAD, FUSSING WITH HER KNITTING...

NO! THERE'S NO USE ARGUING. I GOT MY MIND FIXED. YOU RUN ALONG WITH YOUR SILLY WICKER BASKET. LAND, LAND, WHERE'D YOU EVER GET NOTIONS LIKE THAT? YOU JUST SKIT OUT OF HERE AND DON'T BOTHER ME.



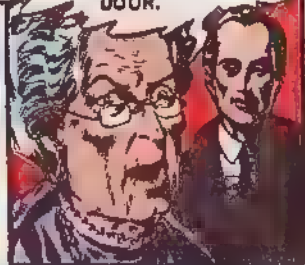
THE TALL DARK MAN SAT DOWN. HE JUST SAT THERE, STARING. THE BONE-PORCELAIN, FLOWERED CLOCK ON THE MANTEL CHIMED THREE. OUT IN THE HALL, GROUPED AROUND THE WICKER BASKET, FOUR MEN WAITED, QUIETLY, HARDLY MOVING, AS IF THEY WERE THERE...

NOW ABOUT THAT WICKER BASKET. IT'S PAST SIX FEET LONG, AND BY THE LOOK OF IT, IT *AIN'T* LAUNDRY. AND THOSE FOUR MEN YOU WALKED IN WITH, YOU DON'T NEED THEM TO CARRY THE BASKET... WHY, IT'S LIGHT AS *THISTLES*! EHP?



THE DARK YOUNG MAN WATCHED AUNT TILDY. SOMETHING IN HIS FACE SUGGESTED THAT THE BASKET WOULDN'T BE SO LIGHT AFTER A WHILE. THERE'D BE SOMETHING IN IT.

NOW *WHERE'VE* I SEEN A WICKER LIKE *THAT* BEFORE? SEEMS TO ME... *OH!* NOW I REMEMBER! IT WAS WHEN MRS. DWYER *PASSED AWAY* NEXT DOOR.



AUNT TILDY SET HER KNITTING DOWN STERNLY...

SO *THAT'S* WHAT YOU'RE HERE FOR, I *THOUGHT* YOU WERE WORKIN', TO *SELL* ME SOMETHING. WELL YOU JUST SET TILL *EMILY* COMES HOME. *SHE'LL* TAKE CARE OF YOU. *SHE'LL* SHOO YOU OUT OF THE PARLOR SO *QUICK*, IT'LL...



THE DARK MAN LOOKED AT AUNT TILDY AS IF SHE WERE TIRED...

NO! I'M *NOT!* I'M *NOT* TIRED! GREAT SONS O' GOSHEN ON THE GILBERRY PIKE. I GOT A HUNDRED *COMFORTERS*, TWO HUNDRED *SWEATERS*, AND SIX HUNDRED *POT-HOLDERS* IN THESE FINGERS, NO MATTER *HOW* SKINNY THEY ARE. YOU RUN AND COME *BACK* WHEN THEY'RE *DONE*... AND MAYBE I'LL TALK TO YOU...



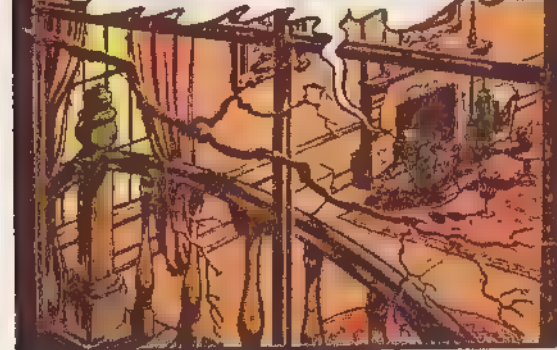
THERE WAS A NOISE. THE MANTEL CLOCK SOUNDED THREE. STRANGE! IT SEEMED TO HER THAT IT HAD CHIMED THREE ONCE BEFORE...

ARE YOU JUST GOIN' TO *SIT* THERE, YOUNG MAN?



HE WAS...

THEN, YOU WON'T MIND IF I TAKE A NAP. JUST A CAT-NAP. NOW YOU DON'T GET UP OFF THAT CHAIR. YOU SET THERE. YOU SET THERE AND DON'T COME CREEPIN' AROUND ME. JUST GOIN' TO CLOSE MY EYES FOR A WEE SPELL...

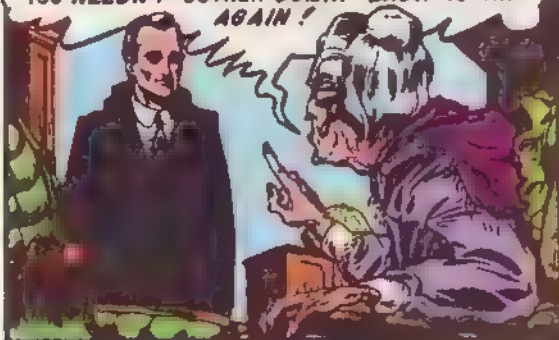


SO FEATHERY. SO DROWSY. SO DEEP. UNDER WATER, ALMOST. OH, SO NICE. *WHO'S* THAT MOVIN' AROUND IN THE DARK WITH MY EYES CLOSED? *WHO'S* THAT *KISSIN'* MY CHEEK? *YOU, EMILY?* NO. GUESS IT WAS MY THOUGHTS. ONLY DREAMIN', DRIFTIN'. DRIFTIN' OFF... OFF...



THE CLOCK CHIMED THREE AGAIN. AUNT TILDY SAT UP. THE YOUNG MAN IN THE DARK SUIT STOOD NEAR THE DOOR...

YOU LEAVIN' SO SOON, YOUNG MAN? GOOD THING! EMILY'S COMIN' HOME AND SHE'D FIX YOU. HAD TO GIVE UP, DIDN'T YOU? COULDN'T CONVINCE ME, COULD YOU? WELL, YOUNG MAN, YOU NEEDN'T BOTHER COMIN' BACK TO TRY AGAIN!



THE DARK YOUNG MAN BOWED WITH SLIGHT DIGNITY. HE HAD NO INTENTION OF COMING BACK... EVER.

FINE. WHY YOU COULDN'T GET ME OUT OF THIS HOUSE. NOSIRREE! WHY, I'M GOING TO KNIT IN THIS WINDOW THE NEXT THOUSAND YEARS. THEY'LL HAVE TO CHEW THE BOARDS AROUND ME TO... TO... QUIT LOOKIN' LIKE THE CAT THAT ATE THE BIRD! GET OUT AND TOTE THAT FOOL WICKER BOX WITH YOU!



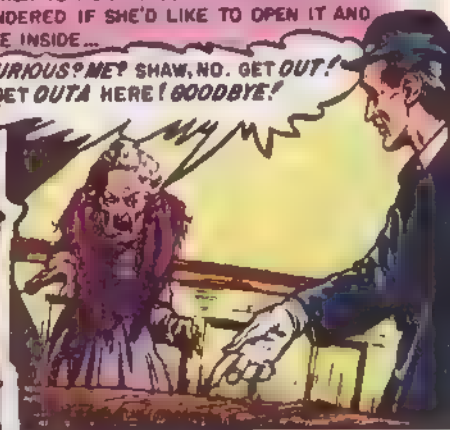
THE FOUR MEN TREADED HEAVILY OUT THE FRONT DOOR. TILDY STUDIED THE WAY THEY HANDLED THE WICKER. IT WASN'T HEAVY, YET THEY STAGGERED WITH ITS WEIGHT. SHE GLANCED ABOUT CONCERNEDLY...

HERE, NOW! DID YOU STEAL SOME OF MY ANTIQUES? MY BOOKS? NO. THE CLOCKS? NO. WHAT YOU GOT IN THAT WICKER?



THE DARK MAN OFFERED THE LID OF THE WICKER TO AUNT TILDY. IN PANTOMIME HE WONDERED IF SHE'D LIKE TO OPEN IT AND GAZE INSIDE...

CURIOUS? ME? SHAW, NO. GET OUT! GET OUTA HERE! GOODBYE!



THE DOOR SLAMMED. THAT WAS BETTER. DARNED FOOL MEN WITH THEIR MAGGOTY IDEAS...

AH. HERE COMES EMILY. ABOUT TIME. BUT, LAND, SHE LOOKS PALE AND FUNNY TODAY. WALKIN' SO SLOW...



EMILY SHUFFLED INTO THE PARLOR, HEAD DOWN... EMILY, I BEEN WAITIN' FOR YOU. THERE WAS THE DARNDDEST FOOL MEN JUST HERE WITH A WICKER. GLAD YOU'RE HOME! EMILY...



EMILY! STOP SCREAMING!



A WHITE-SMOCKED MAN, EVIDENTLY A MORTICIAN, GLANCED UP FROM THE RECENTLY ARRIVED WICKER AS AUNT TILDY STORMED INTO THE MORTUARY...

MADAME! THIS IS NO FIT PLACE FOR A GENTLE-WOMAN!

WELL, GLAD YOU FEEL THAT WAY. THEM'S MY SENTIMENTS, EXACTLY. I DON'T WANT ME HERE! I WANT ME HOME. I GOT EMILY TO FEED! SWEATERS TO KNIT! CLOCKS TO WIND...

THE MORTICIAN LOOKED AT HER... THEN AT THE WICKER. HE MOUTHED HIS WORDS WITH APPARENT RELISH, AND A WINNOWING OF HIS KNIVES, TUBES, JARS AND INSTRUMENTS...

MADAME! I HAVE WORK TO DO! A BODY HAS ARRIVED!

YOU LAY SO MUCH AS A CUTICLE ON THAT BODY AND I'LL THRASH YOU...

THE MORTICIAN OPENED THE WICKER LID CASUALLY. THEN, IN A RECURRENT SERIES OF SCRUTINIES, HE REALIZED THAT THE BODY INSIDE WAS... IT SEEMED... COULD IT BE...

EH... THIS LADY, HERE? SHE IS... A... RELATIVE?

NO, YOU FOOL! ME! DO YOU HEAR? ME! I WANT MY BODY BACK!

THE MORTICIAN CONSIDERED THE IDEA. HE SHOOK HIS HEAD...

NO! THINGS LIKE THIS DON'T HAPPEN! GEORGE! SHOW HER OUT! GET HELP FROM THE OTHERS! I CAN'T WORK WITH A CRANK PRESENT!

THE FOUR MEN ASSEMBLED AND CONVERGED. AUNT TILDY WAS A LACE FORTRESS, ARMS CROSSED IN DEFIANCE...

WON'T BUDGE...

SHE REPEATED THIS AS SHE WAS EVICTED IN CONSECUTIVE MOVES, LIKE A PAWN ON A CHESSBOARD, FROM THE LABORATORY. FINALLY, SHE SAT DOWN ON A CHAIR IN THE VESTIBULE OF THE FUNERAL PARLOR. THERE WERE PEWS GOING BACK INTO GREY SILENCE, AND A FLOWER SMELL...

YOU CAN'T SIT THERE, MA'AM! THAT'S WHERE THE BODY RESTS FOR THE SERVICES T'MORROW!

I'M SITTIN' HERE TILL I GET WHAT I WANT!

MR. CARRINGTON, MORTUARY PRESIDENT, HEARD THE DISTURBANCE AND CAME TODDLING DOWN THE AISLE TO INVESTIGATE...

HERE, HERE! MORE RESPECT! OH MADAME. MAY I HELP YOU?

GO IN THAT BACK ROOM THERE AND TELL THAT EAGER INVESTIGATOR TO QUIT FOOLIN' WITH MY BODY!

MR. CARRINGTON HURRIED OFF.
AFTER FIFTEEN MINUTES OF COM-
PARING NOTES WITH THE MORTI-
CIAN BEHIND CLOSED DOORS, HE
RETURNED, THREE SHADES WHITER...

UH... THAT IS...
MOST IRREGULAR!
MOST IRREGULAR!

LOOK HERE,
MISTER BLOOD
AND BONES!
YOU TELL
THAT...

BUT HE'S **ALREADY**
PUMPING THE **BLOOD**
FROM THE **BODY!**

WHAT?

YES, YES. SO, YOU JUST GO AWAY.
NOW, THERE'S NOTHING TO BE
DONE. THE **BLOOD'S** RUNNING
AND SOON THE BODY'LL BE
ALL FILLED WITH NICE FRESH
FORMALDEHYDE. AND
BESIDES... HE'S ALSO PER-
FORMING A BRIEF **AUTOPSY!**

CUT-
TIN'
ME,
IS
HE?

Y-YES. TO DETERMINE
CAUSE OF DEATH,
Y'KNOW. HE...

MARCH STRAIGHT IN AND
TELL THAT CUT-EM-UP TO
PUMP ALL THAT FINE NEW
ENGLAND BLOOD **RIGHT**
BACK INTO THAT FINE-
SKINNED BODY! AND IF
HE'S TAKEN ANYTHING **OUT**, FOR
HIM TO ATTACH IT **BACK IN** SO
IT'LL FUNCTION PROPER!
YOU HEAR?

THERE'S NOTHING I
CAN DO. **NOTHING!**

ALL RIGHT! I'M **SETTIN'** HERE.
THE NEXT **TWO HUNDRED**
YEARS! YOU HEAR? AND ANY-
TIME ANYONE COMES NEAR
ME, I'LL SPIT **ECTOPLASM**
RIGHT SQUIRT UP THEIR **LEFT**
NOSTRIL...

YOU... YOU WOULDN'T DO
THAT? YOU... YOU'LL
DISLOCATE OUR BUSINESS!
YOU WOULDN'T...

OH, WOULDN'T I?

ALL RIGHT! **ALL**
RIGHT! YOU CAN
HAVE YOUR BODY
BACK!

HA!



AUNT TILDY SHOUTED IN TRIUMPH.
THEN...WITH CAUTION...

INTACT? NO
FORMALDEHYDE? INTACT? NO
FORMALDEHYDE?

BLOOD
BACK IN
IT?

BLOOD, MY GOD, YES,
BLOOD! IF YOU'LL
ONLY TAKE IT AND
GO!

FAIR ENOUGH.
FIX 'ER UP.
IT'S A DEAL.

I'LL...TELL THE
MORTICIAN.

AUNTIE TILDY DIDN'T LOOK AT THE BODY MUCH. HER
ONLY COMMENT WAS...

NATURAL LOOKIN'. EASY! EASY! PUT THE WICKER
BASKET DOWN T' THE FLOOR WHERE I CAN STEP
IN IT.

THEN SHE LET HERSELF FALL BACK INTO THE
WICKER. A BITING SENSATION OF ARTIO GOLDNESS,
A GREAT UNLIKELY NAUSEA, AND A GIDDY WHORLING,
LIKE TWO DROPS OF MATTER FUSING TOGETHER.
WATER TRYING TO SEEP INTO CONCRETE...

THE MORTUARY PEOPLE WATCHED AUNT TILDY'S WRIG-
GLES... TRYING TO ASSIST WITH BOOSTING AND
GRUNTING MOVES OF THEIR ARMS AND HANDS. SEEP-
ING INTO COLD GRANITE. SEEPING INTO A FROZEN
STATUE... SQUEEZING ALL THE WAY...

THE BODY HALF ROSE, RUSTLING IN THE DRY
WICKER...

SEE! FEEL!

COME ALIVE, DERN YE! RAISE UP
A BIT...

LIGHT ENTERED THE WEBBED BLIND EYES. THE BODY FELT THE ROOM WARMTH...



MOVE...WALK...

THE BODY TOOK A CREAKINGLY UNSTEADY STEP. THE BODY WALKED...



NOW...SPEAK! MUCH OBLIGED. THANK YOU. NOW...CRY!

...AND AUNT TILDY BEGAN TO CRY TEARS OF UTTER HAPPINESS.

AND NOW, ANY AFTERNOON ABOUT FOUR, IF YOU WANT TO VISIT AUNT TILDY, YOU JUST WALK AROUND AND KNOCK ON HER DOOR. THERE'S A BIG BLACK FUNERAL WREATH ON IT...BUT DON'T MIND THAT. AUNT TILDY LEFT IT THERE. SHE HAS A SENSE OF HUMOR. JUST RAP ON THE DOOR AND SHE'LL SAY...

IS IT THE MAN IN BLACK?

NO. IT'S ONLY ME, AUNT TILDY!

SHE'LL UNLOCK THE DOUBLE-BARRED, TRIPLE-LOCKED DOOR AND SHE'LL LAUGH AND SAY...

COME IN... QUICKLY!



AND SHE'LL WHIP THE DOOR OPEN AND SLAM IT SHUT BEHIND YOU SO NO MAN-IN-BLACK CAN EVER SLIP IN WITH YOU. THEN SHE'LL ESCORT YOU IN, AND MAYBE POUR YOU SOME TEA...AND MAYBE...IF YOU'RE 'SPECIALLY GOOD, SHE'LL GIVE YOU A TREAT. SHE'LL UNFASTEN THE WHITE LACE AT HER NECK AND CHEST AND, FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, SHOW WHAT LIES BENEATH...THE LONG BLUE AUTOPSY SCAR...

NOT BAD SEWIN'... FOR A MAN!

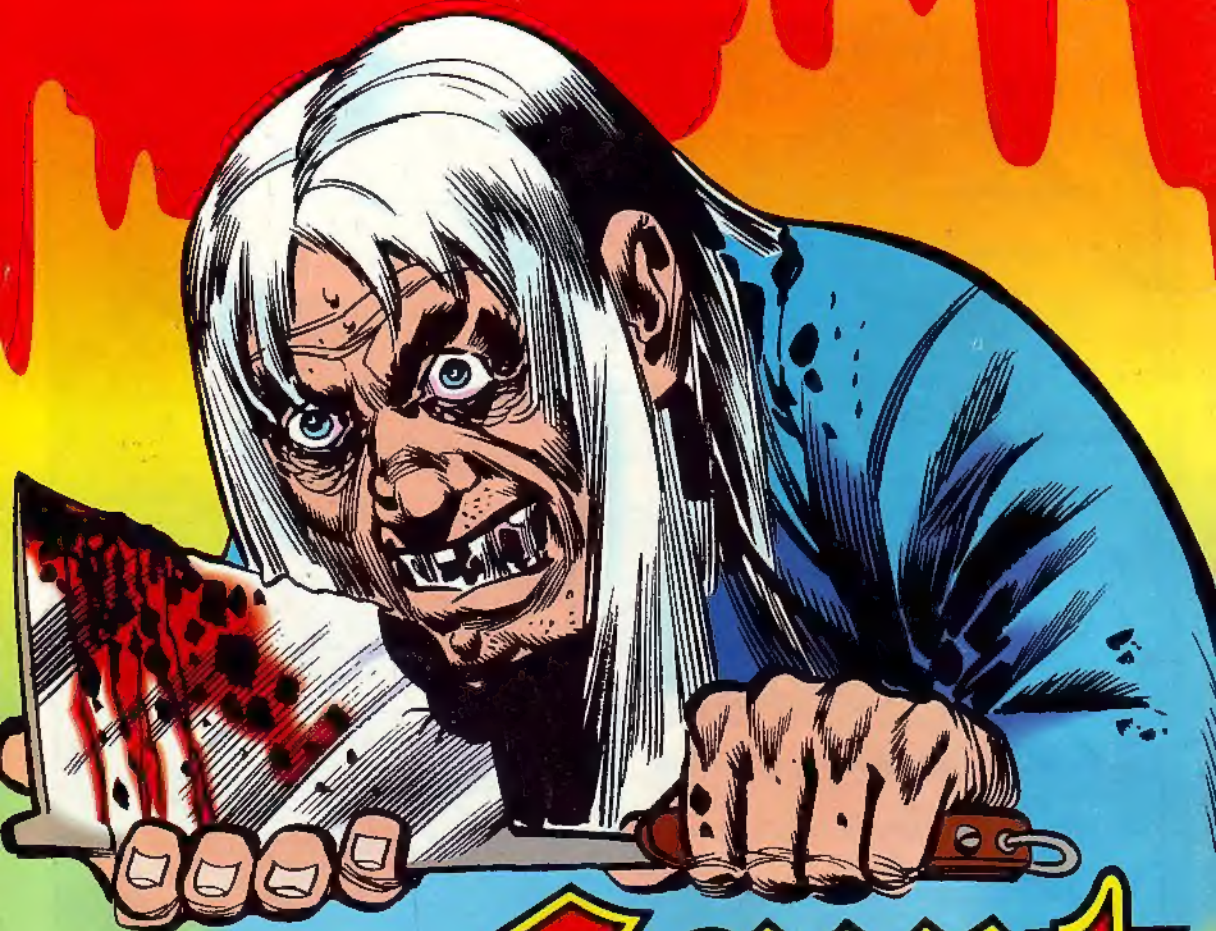


HEE, HEE! YEP, FIENDS. THAT'S AUNT TILDY'S STORY...THE WAY RAY BRADBURY TOLD IT T'ME.

I HOPE YOU LIKED MY LITTLE SERVING OF SHIVERS FOR THIS ISSUE OF G.K.'S MAG. WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN THE VAULT-KEEPER'S... THE VAULT OF HORROR. 'BYE, NOW!



THE END



The CRYPT KEEPER

